

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chaplain's spiritual message sets tone for Golden Coyote exercise

By Spc. Kristin Lichius
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RAPID CITY, S.D. – U.S. Army Brig. Gen. David Graetz, the assistant chief of chaplains for the Army National Guard gave a spiritual message to participants of the Golden Coyote training exercise during the 7th prayer breakfast at Camp Rapid, June 8.

The prayer breakfast is an opportunity for chaplains and their assistants as well as other service members to begin their Golden Coyote training with an encouraging message.

“It sets the tone for a good exercise and reminds people that God is with us during our training,” said Graetz. “If you look at the training with the perspective that you are preparing to deploy, it’s important to know that God is with us, walking with us and supporting us in the jobs that we do.”

Others agree that beginning Golden Coyote with the prayer breakfast is the best way to encourage service members and help them focus on the two-week mission.

“The prayer breakfast has become an instrumental part of Golden Coyote,” said Lt. Col. Lynn Wilson, the full-time support chaplain of the South Dakota National Guard. “The leadership recognizes the importance of encouraging service members in their faith and supporting them in their missions.”

Following the prayer breakfast, the members of the Chaplain Corps spent the rest of the day discussing the goals and directives of the new chief, leadership skills and what it means to be a chaplain or a chaplain’s assistant.

“I hope today’s training helps the other chaplains to get a better sense of their calling and know that what they’re doing is a very important part of the military,” said Graetz.

The number of attendants has steadily grown over the last few years, said Wilson.

Approximately 60 people attended this year’s prayer breakfast. Among the attendants were chaplains from Canada, Denmark and the United Kingdom.

“For me, this is the first international exercise that I’ve done, and I’m looking forward to seeing how we all work together,” said Canadian Army Maj. Andre Turcotte, the senior chaplain of Forward Operating Base Custer at Custer State Park.

Although the participants of the Golden Coyote exercise come from around the world, each service member plays a role in the success of the training and the missions being conducted.

“I believe we all have a calling, we all have something that God wants us to do, and allowed us to be a part of,” said Graetz. “As National Guard Soldiers, National Guard Airmen, as chaplains and others in military services we have been given an important role.”

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard



150608-Z-BP728-043: U.S. Army Brig. Gen. David Graetz, the assistant chief of chaplains for the Army National Guard, gives a spiritual message during the Golden Coyote prayer breakfast, June 8, 2015, on Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D. The prayer breakfast provides an opportunity for service members to receive spiritual support and encouragement for their upcoming training. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Kristin Lichius/Released)



150608-Z-ZZ999-802: Service members gather to enjoy a meal during the Golden Coyote prayer breakfast, June 8, 2015, on Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D. The prayer breakfast provides an opportunity for service members to receive spiritual support and encouragement for their upcoming training. (Danish Home Guard photo by Capt. Ulla Sorensen-Molgaard/Released)



150608-Z-BP728-020: U.S. Army Brig. Gen. David Graetz the assistant chief of chaplains for the Army National Guard, right, speaks with Canadian Maj. Andre Turcotte of the 33rd Canadian Brigade Group during the Golden Coyote prayer breakfast, June 8, 2015, on Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D. The Golden Coyote exercise provides an opportunity for U.S. and international service members to train together and strengthen relations between allied forces. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Kristin Lichius/Released)



150608-Z-BP728-077: U.S. Army Brig. Gen. David Graetz, the assistant chief of chaplains for the Army National Guard gives a speech during the Golden Coyote prayer breakfast, June 8, 2015, on Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D. Graetz encouraged the service members to remain strong and courageous as they participate in the Golden Coyote training exercise, hosted by the South Dakota National Guard. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Kristin Lichius/Released)



150608-Z-ZZ999-801: British Army Capt. Allan Corbain mingles with other service members attending the Golden Coyote prayer breakfast June 8, 2015, on Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D. The prayer breakfast provides an opportunity for service members to receive spiritual support and encouragement for their upcoming training. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Kristin Lichius/Released)

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